

# THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

THR.COM/AFM

AFM

DAILY  
No 4

NOVEMBER  
9, 2013

CARLA GUGINO  
RUFUS SEWELL  
ROSARIO DAWSON  
ROBERT FORSTER  
MALIN AKERMAN  
MANDY MOORE  
DANNY DEVITO



## *Hotel* NOIR

A FILM BY  
SEBASTIAN GUTIERREZ



AMERICA VIDEO FILMS AT 2013 AFM  
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SHANGRI-LA ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:  
A GATO NEGRO FILMS PRODUCTION "HOTEL NOIR"  
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DANNY DEVITO, ROBERT FORSTER, CARLA GUGINO, MANDY MOORE,  
RUFUS SEWELL MUSIC BY ROBIN HANNIBAL, MATHIEU SCHREYER  
MAKEUP DESIGN ERMAHN OSPINA COSTUME DESIGN BETSY HEIMANN  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER JEFFREY MACINTYRE  
EDITED BY LISA BROMWELL A.C.E. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY CALE FINOT  
PRODUCED BY STEVE BING, SEBASTIAN GUTIERREZ, ZACH SCHWARTZ  
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**THE**  
*Hollywood*  
**REPORTER**

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# THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

LOS ANGELES  
WEATHER  
AND HIGH  
TEMPS

TODAY  
73° F  
23° C

TOMORROW  
75° F  
24° C

## Kavanaugh Predicts Summer 'Bloodbath' in '04

By Alex Ben Block

**R**yan Kavanaugh sees plenty of new financing opportunities for independents and a tough summer ahead for major studios who are depending on expensive action movies to win over audiences.

"My prediction is that there is going to be a major bloodbath," said the Relativity Media CEO during the opening panel of the American Film Market finance conference Friday. "There's an oversaturation of big superhero movies, and they are becoming just more of the same ... The audience is going to get sick of it."

It's hard to deny that the studios are stacking up the superhero and event tentpoles. The month from May through June 2014 will see the back-to-back release of Sony's *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*, Fox's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## UNI INT'L CATCHES COOTIES

By Pamela McClintock

**U**niversal isn't scared of *Cooties*.

In a boost for **Elijah Wood's** new horror production company, Universal Pictures International Entertainment has struck a multiterritory deal for distribution rights to *Cooties*, including for the U.K., Germany and Brazil. The horror-comedy stars Wood opposite **Alison Pill** and **Rainn Wilson**.

**Cary Munion** and **Jonathan Milott** directed *Cooties* from a script by fright master **Leigh Whannell** (*Saw*, *Insidious*) and *Glee* co-creator **Ian Brennan**, who also serve as executive producers. In the film,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Dealmakers: We Need More Talent!

With castmembers remaining an essential selling point overseas, AFM insiders complain that the battle for bankable stars leads back to the same handful of names By Pamela McClintock and Scott Roxborough

**O**n the eve of AFM, Foresight Unlimited's **Mark Damon** and **Timothy Scott Bogart** were in marathon negotiations to close a deal for **Spike Lee** to direct **Justin Timberlake** in *Spinning Gold*, a biopic of legendary record executive **Neil Bogart**. The timing was agonizing for Damon, who wanted Lee in place before the start of the American Film Market.

It was a familiar story for sales agents at AFM, who are increasingly frustrated at the difficulty in closing talent deals as the pool of viable stars becomes overfished. The pact with Lee was made official just as AFM got underway Wednesday — but not a moment too soon.

Lotus Entertainment and Worldview Entertainment found themselves in an even more precarious position this week as Lotus officially began shopping **Nancy Meyers** comedy *The Intern*. **Reese Witherspoon** offered a powerful selling point in discussions to star, but Lotus can't say that she's in for sure to foreign buyers.

In May, distributors rushed to buy sci-fi epic *Passengers* when Witherspoon became attached to star opposite **Keanu Reeves**. The Weinstein Co. struck a multiterritory deal with Exclusive Media. But then Witherspoon dropped out. On the eve of AFM, it was announced that **Rachel McAdams** is now the female lead.

"In a way, we're reaping what we've sown," says **Lisa Wilson**, co-founder of The Solution Group.

"There's a handful of actors and actresses that we've made valuable. We're all making the same offers to the same actors."

The battle for bankable names has resulted in fewer high-profile projects being introduced at the premiere film markets. The trend, which was evident at this year's Cannes Film Festival, continues at AFM.

The problem: Because the theatrical release of an indie film has become such a risky proposal, buyers are only willing to bet on an actor who can open a film worldwide.

"Who is in the cast is everything, especially for international," says **Marsha Metz**, senior executive vp business & legal affairs at Constantin Film, speaking at AFM's film financing forum. "We would love to go with that great unknown actor, but when we go to our sales agent, they tell us, 'No one knows who this guy is, we can't sell him.' So we have to pick someone from their cast list."

And that list is very short indeed, as evidenced by the number of A-listers with multiple projects being shopped at this year's market. **Gerard Butler** has Lionsgate's *Gods of Egypt* and Nu Image's *Olympus*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Producers George Clooney (left) and Grant Heslov arrive at the 2013 AFI Fest premiere of *August: Osage County* at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood.



THR HEAT INDEX



JAY Z

Just a day after being declared dead in an Internet hoax, the uber rapper celebrates his resurrection as his **Ron Howard**-directed concert doc *Made in America* gets picked up for theatrical release by Phase 4 Films.



CHARLIE SHEEN

The U.S. president in *Machete Kills* gets a dressing down from a case judge after **Scott Mueller**, the brother of Sheen's troubled ex-wife **Brooke Mueller**, was named the temporary guardian for Sheen's 4-year-old twin sons. If the actor talks or tweets publicly about the case, he could go to jail.



THE HUNGER GAMES

Ahead of the release of the second *Hunger Games* film, Lionsgate says a theme park based on the blockbuster YA franchise may be in the works. But who would let their kids ride the The Arena's Kamikaze?

KNOW YOUR DEALMAKER



Christopher Woodrow  
CEO, Worldview Entertainment

The financing and production company is backing three new hot titles at AFM: **Nancy Meyers'** romantic comedy *The Intern* (**Reese Witherspoon** is in talks to star), *The Outsider*, starring **Tom Hardy** and **Stephen Graham's** *Candy Store*, starring **Robert De Niro**, **Christoph Waltz**, **Omar Sy** and **Jason Clarke**.

Cooties

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

an unlikely hero (a substitute teacher) must lead a motley band of teachers in the fight of their lives when a mysterious virus borne from chicken nuggets hits an isolated elementary school, transforming the pre-adolescent children into a feral swarm of mindless cannibals.

Synchronicity Entertainment is handling the film internationally and struck the deal with Universal International. Synchronicity is a partnership between The Solution Group and Siren Studios.

*Cooties* is one of the first titles from SpectreVision, the production company founded by Wood, **Daniel Noah** and **Josh C. Waller** with a focus on horror films. **Steven Schneider** (*Paranormal Activity*, *Insidious*), **Tove Christensen** and **Georgy Malkov** also produced *Cooties*, which Paradigm is representing domestically.

"Not since *Gremlins* struck a nerve have little monsters terrorized a town in a wildly entertaining take on the horror genre," said **Ruzanna Kegeyan**, president of Synchronicity Entertainment. "UPIE's enthusiasm for the release in such key international territories as the U.K. and Germany promises that *Cooties* has found the perfect home where it can grow globally." **THR**

Talent

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

*Has Fallen*; **Tom Hardy** titles include **Elton John** biopic *Rocketman* and QED's *The Outsider*; ex-Harry Potter **Daniel Radcliffe** is signed on to play a crime journalist in *Tokyo Vice* and British Olympic champ **Sebastian Coe** in Embankment Films' *Gold*. **Russell Crowe** has *Fathers and Daughters* for Voltage Films and his directorial debut, *The Water Diviner*, which co-stars **Olga Kurylenko**. Kurylenko, in turn, is a headliner on The Solution's *November Man* and on Moonrise Pictures' *Momentum*. But AFM's true multiproject champ is **Pierce Brosnan**, who is headlining about a half-dozen projects, among them *November Man*, the revenge thriller *I.T.*, Sierra/Affinity's *The Coup* and rom-com *How to Make Love Like an Englishman*.

Both buyers and sellers know the situation is untenable. They are counting on a new generation of stars — **Joel Edgerton**, **Luke Grimes**, **Jai Courtney** — to break through to broaden and deepen the talent pool.

"Look at what happened with **Bradley Cooper**, **Michael Fassbender**, **Jennifer Lawrence** or **Carey Mulligan**, they came out of nowhere and now you can package them," said Wilson. "We just need a lot more names like them." **THR**

Summer Bloodbath

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

*X-Men: Days of Future Past*, Warner Bros.' sci-fi actioner *Edge of Tomorrow* and Paramount's *Transformers: Age of Extinction*.

"I see studios piling on more and more giant tentpoles," said Kavanaugh, "with billions in [prints and advertising] and billions in production. I don't see a slowdown of it. I see a speed-up. It's scary for the industry."

Kavanaugh said if his prediction comes true, the studios could lose "\$400 million, \$500 million," a loss that will "ripple right through the middle of our industry" and scaring off some of the new money flowing in from digital and international sources.

Kavanaugh, and fellow panelists **Mark Canton**, chairman and CEO of Atmosphere Entertainment, and **Steve Ransohoff**, co-president of Film Finances, a completion-bond company, agreed there has never been more sources of money for independently made movies.

That is because of the proliferation of online and digital financing and distribution including Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, Microsoft Xbox and many others, both in the U.S. and increasingly around the world.

Ransohoff said that when his company started in 1950 it was doing 11 movies a year, and this year it will do 250 — and more next year.

"It's become a lot more complicated to get films done," said Ransohoff. "But there's a lot more distribution and a lot more capital floating around. Most films today find some means of distribution — even if it is not theatrical — which give people better ways to raise capital." **THR**

Universal Scores Soccer Pic *Hooligan*

By Stuart Kemp

Universal Pictures International Entertainment, the international home entertainment division of Universal Pictures, has inked a multiple-territory deal for **Nick Nevern's** British soccer spoof *The Hooligan Factory*.

The movie details the story of a young man desperate to live up to the image of his estranged father who ends up falling in with a legendary soccer hooligan recently released from jail.

UPIE inked the deal with Altitude Film Sales at the American Film Market in Santa Monica. Territories covered in the deal include the U.K., where the film will be released in 2014, as well as the Nordics, Eastern Europe and Brazil.

Nevern directed and co-wrote the film with **Michael Lindley**, with **Jason Maza** taking the lead role and producing alongside Altitude Film Entertainment. **THR**

SUNDANCE SELECTS TAKES JUMP

By Scott Roxborough

Sundance Selects has acquired North American rights to *Run & Jump*, an unconventional Irish love story that is the feature debut of Oscar-nominated short film director **Steph Green** (*New Boy*).

Former *Saturday Night Live* castmember **Will Forte** stars in the film as a buttoned-up American researcher who travels to Ireland to study a man who has suffered a stroke that has transformed his personality. While living with the man's family, his presence initially has a soothing influence but eventually sets the family on course for an emotional crash. **Maxine Peake**, **Edward MacLiam** and **Sharon Horgan** also star.

*Run & Jump* premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and went on to win Best Irish Feature and Best First Irish Feature at the Galway film festival this year. **THR**



FLORIAN DAVID FITZ

HENRY HÜBCHEN

MARKET PREMIERE



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BETA CINEMA



## DRAGON NEST ON FIRE FOR ALL RIGHTS

By Clifford Coonan

Paris and Hong Kong-based independent sales and production outfit All Rights Entertainment has reported lively interest in the Chinese animation film *Dragon Nest: Rise of the Black Dragon*, with sales to multiple territories at AFM.

*Dragon Nest* is the first animation project by Mili Pictures. The 3D project is adapted from a popular Asian role-playing game by Shanda Games. It tells of a village boy who is transformed into a hero as he takes on the Black Dragon.

"We have 5,000 screens confirmed, including the Chinese distributor Huaxia to release on 1,200 screens, and for France, we have Universal and another company will handle German-speaking countries and Benelux," said **Aymeric Contat Desfontaines**, managing director and CEO of All Rights.

Animation has long been the weak sister in China's film industry, but it is a genre the government is keen to foster. Links with the booming games industry are also translating into more animation film projects.

"We are about to close Italy and Spain very soon. We just closed Turkey and are in negotiation with four major distributors for the U.S., as we expect to get 800 to 1,000 screens in the U.S.," said Contat Desfontaines.

The movie is directed by China's **Song Yuefeng** and features design and art direction by **Grant Major**, who worked on the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The first in a trilogy, it has a \$23 million budget and is due to be released in June.

"We will have the market premiere in Berlin and maybe get the premiere in Annecy. We have more deals coming up. People like the China angle," he said.

Other titles that All Rights has in production include *Mido Dido*, directed by **Horus Chai**, and *Monster Dad* by **Chen Bingfeng**. *Mido Dido* has been presold in such countries as Korea and Turkey.

All Rights added that *Monster Dad* has attracted "big interest" from a U.S. distributor. **THR**

## Buyers Line Up for Theron's *Dark Places*

Hoult, Moretz, Hendricks and de Matteo also star in the adaptation of Gillian Flynn's bestseller

By Scott Roxborough

International buyers are more than willing to follow **Charlize Theron** to *Dark Places* as Exclusive Media has racked up presale deals across Europe and Asia for the feature adaptation of **Gillian Flynn**'s best-selling novel about a brutal crime and its impact a quarter-century later.

Exclusive, which is producing and co-financing *Dark Places*, closed all-rights deals for the title at AFM for France (Mars), Canada (Remstar), Japan (CCC), Scandinavia (Svensk), Switzerland (Ascot Elite) and Russia (West), among many others. *Dark Places* also has sold out across Latin America, Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia.

Theron produces and stars as Libby Day, a woman who, as a 7-year-old-girl, survived the massacre of her family. She testified against her brother as the murderer but, 25 years later, a group investigating the crime confronts her with questions about what really happened.

**Nicholas Hoult**, **Chloe Moretz**, **Christina Hendricks** and **Drea de**



Theron plays a woman forced to revisit her family's massacre.

**Matteo** also star. **Gilles Paquet-Brenner** (*Sarah's Key*) wrote and directed *Dark Places*, with Exclusive Media and Cuatro Plus Films providing financing.

Exclusive's **Matt Jackson** is producing with **Stephane Marsil** of Hugo Films, Theron's Denver & Delilah Productions partners **Beth Kono** and **A.J. Dix** and Mandalay's **Cathy Schulman** and **Matt Rhodes**. Exclusive's **Guy East**, **Nigel Sinclair**, **Tobin Armbrust** and **Alex Brunner** will receive executive producer credits along with **Peter Safran**.

Flynn's most recent novel, *Gone*

*Girl*, spent eight weeks at No. 1 on The New York Times Best Seller list and has sold some 2 million copies to date.

"The best-selling author of three novels including *Gone Girl*, Gillian Flynn has proved to be the big drawing card to buyers as well as the film's all-star cast, and the response so far has been incredible," said **Alex Walton**, president of international sales and distribution for Exclusive Media.

*Dark Places* is in postproduction. Exclusive is screening first footage of the film for buyers at AFM. **THR**

## Only Women Allowed for This Horror Anthology

Lynch, Harron and the Soska sisters are among those starring and directing XX. It's time for a 'different approach to scaring audiences,' execs say By Borys Kit

MPI/Dark Sky Films and XYZ Films are producing XX, an all-female horror anthology with segments starring females and helmed by female filmmakers.

The companies have assembled an impressive roster: **Jennifer Lynch** (*Boxing Helena*, *Chained*), **Mary Harron** (*American Psycho*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*), **Karyn Kusama** (*Girlfight*, *Jennifer's Body*), **Jen and Sylvia Soska** (known as the Soska sisters with credits including *Dead Hooker in a Trunk*, *American Mary*) and **Jovanka Vuckovic** (*The Captured Bird*, *The Guest*).

The plan is for the filmmakers to develop their own stories, which will be interspersed with work from Guadalajara-based stop-motion animator **Sofia Carrillo**, who will also create the film's title sequence.

**Todd Brown** (*The Raid: Redemption*) will produce for XYZ. **Greg Newman** will serve as executive producer for MPI/Dark Sky

along with **Nate Bolotin**, **Nick Spicer** and **Aram Tertzakian** of XYZ.

"One of the givens of so many horror films has been the objectification of young women," Brown said, "and we thought it was time for a different approach to scaring audiences and letting the female voice be heard."

Added Newman, executive vp of Dark Sky Films' parent company, MPI: "We know that women make up about half of the audience for horror films, and yet the female creative voice has been nearly silent in the horror genre. So we are thrilled about the new and distinct approach that these talented directors will bring to the project."

Horror anthologies have made a comeback in the past few years with such movies as *V/H/S* and *The ABCs of Death*.

MPI/Dark Sky Films is handling international sales at AFM and co-representing the film with XYZ Films. **THR**



Lynch



Jen and Sylvia Soska

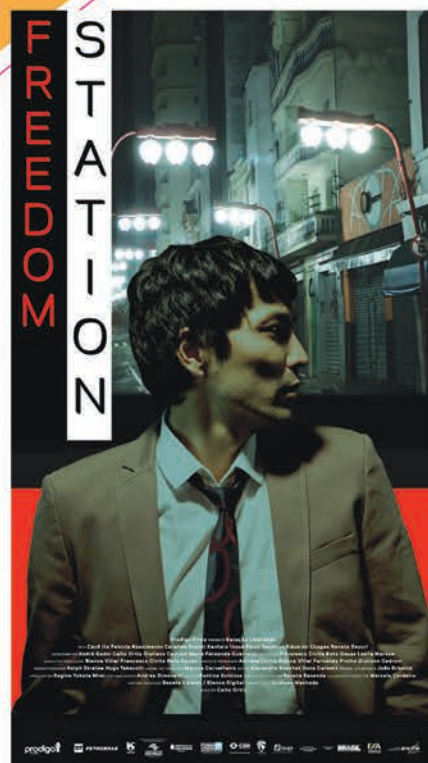


**Cinema do Brasil** proudly announces the films  
for the **AFM Market Screening 2013**



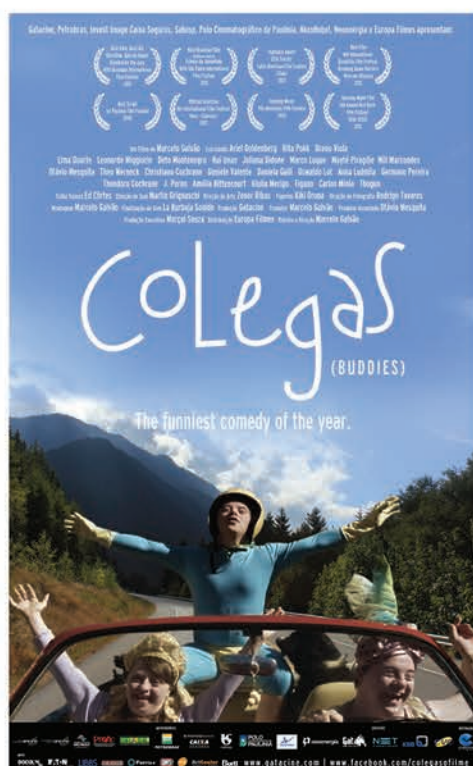
**> FEED ME**  
by **Claudia S. Damasceno**  
Production by **Duna Films**

**Nov. 10 > 11:00 am**  
**Doubletree 1**



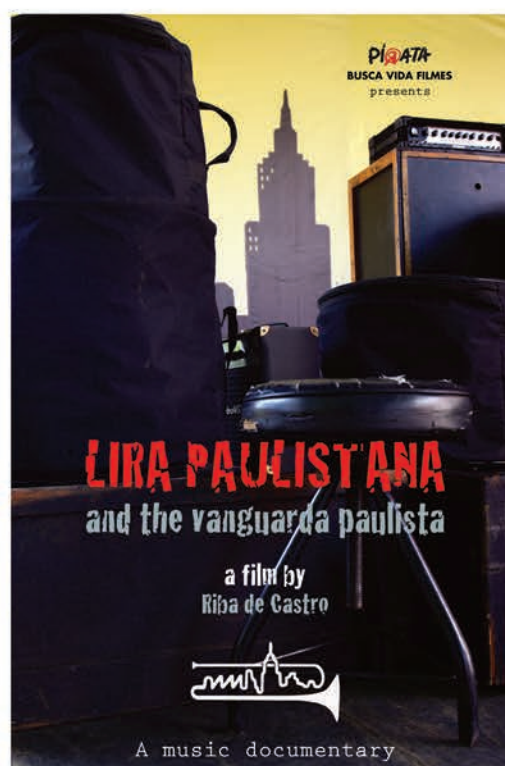
**> FREEDOM STATION**  
*Estação Liberdade*  
by **Caíto Ortiz**  
Production by **Prodigio**

**Nov. 10 > 1:00 pm**  
**Fairmont 1**



**> BUDDIES**  
*Colegas*  
by **Marcelo Galvão**  
Production by **Gatacine**

**Nov. 10 > 3:00 pm**  
**Fairmont 5**



**> LIRA PAULISTANA AND THE VANGUARDA PAULISTA**  
*Lira Paulistana e a Vanguarda Paulista*  
by **Riba de Castro**  
Production by **Busca Vida**

**Nov. 10 > 5:00 pm**  
**Fairmont 3**

Realization



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## AFM IN BRIEF



Boyle in  
*Hansel and Gretel  
& The 4:20 Witch*.

### JINGA HIGH ON HANSEL AND GRETEL & THE 4:20 WITCH

Jinga Films has closed multiple territory deals for *Hansel and Gretel & the 4:20 Witch*, a comedy horror title starring **Lara Flynn Boyle**, **Cary Elwes**, **Molly Quinn** and **Michael Welch**. Jinga closed for Italy (Adler Entertainment), Latin America (Flashstar) and Korea (Thanks & Love). The film, in which a suburban witch entices local children to their doom by offering them high-grade marijuana, was released in North America by Tribeca as *Hansel & Gretel Get Baked*.

### INTANDEM MOUNTS BRIT CRIME DRAMA TOP DOG

Intandem Films has picked up international sales rights for *Top Dog*, a British crime drama from actor-turned-director **Martin Kemp** (*The Krays*), and is presenting the title to buyers at AFM. Now shooting in London, *Top Dog* stars **Leo Gregory** as a leader of a local hooligan gang who gets in over his head when he joins a larger, professional criminal organization. **Ricci Harnett** (*28 Days Later*) **Vincent Regan** (*Clash of the Titans*) and **Dannielle Brent** (*Ill Manors*) also star.

### A FEW BEST MEN SEQUEL MOVES FORWARD

Arclight Films and ScreenWest have greenlit development on the sequel to **Stephan Elliott's** raunchy comedy *A Few Best Men*, with a 2014 start date planned in Western Australia. *Few Best Men* screenwriter **Dean Craig** will pen the sequel and helm in his directorial debut. The first film took in nearly \$14 million globally. **THR**

## THE 2013 AFM POSTER AWARDS

**THR** pays tribute to the most amusing and over-the-top promotional materials from this year's market

Baby  
Edition



### Best Prequel to the Terrible Twos

#### **Hell Baby**

Since this film is from the makers of *Reno 911!*, which *The Telegraph* called "the poor man's *Police Academy: Mission to Moscow*," is *Hell Baby* the poor man's *Omen IV: The Awakening* meets *Dumb and Dumberer: When Harry Met Lloyd*?



### The Nothing to Sneeze at Award

#### **Sneezing Baby Panda**

You saw it on YouTube, 30 Rock and Justin Bieber: *Never Say Never!* But you ain't seen nothing yet. Because this is a parody of *Forrest Gump* and *Zelig*, with an adorable panda sneezing at pivotal moments in Chinese history. Sold.



### The Creepiest, Most Crowded Crib Award

#### **Hello Babies**

Two businessmen get competitive about who's going to have the most grandchildren. Director Vincent Kok Tak-chiu calls this "one of the most hard-laughing movies" he's ever produced. Evidently, it was hard to find babies for the poster, so he sewed famous heads onto bodies. Awww!



### The Demonic Dolls Need Love Too Award

#### **3D Baby Blues**

A doll containing an ancient abandoned child's spirit in the haunted house of a postpartum-depression victim who tosses her real baby out the window just wants to be loved. Is that so wrong? (Loosely based on the little-known classic by legendary bluesman Robert Johnson.)



## BULLET

Completed

MARKET PREMIERE



ACTION / THRILLER

Cast: Danny Trejo, Jonathan Banks, Julia Dietze

SCREENING TOMORROW

Sun Nov 10th – 1pm – Broadway Cineplex 1

## CHARMING (3D)

Pre-production

NEW TITLE



ANIMATION / ACTION / FAIRY TALE

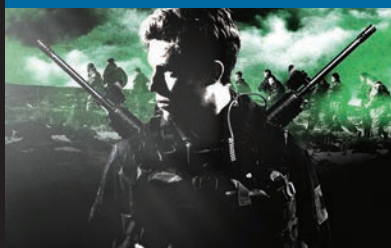
Cast: Prince Charming, Snow White and The Seven Dwarves, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty

Producer: John H. Williams, Dan Krech

## I AM SOLDIER

Completed

MARKET PREMIERE



ACTION

UK release: Lionsgate

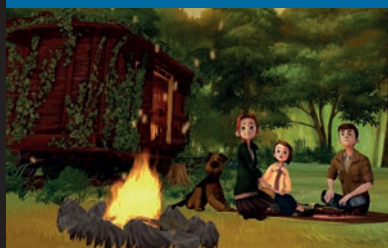
SCREENING TOMORROW

Sun Nov 10th – 5pm – Broadway Cineplex 3

## THE BOXCAR CHILDREN

Completed

NEW TITLE



ANIMATION / FAMILY / DRAMA

Voice: Zach Gordon, Martin Sheen

Over 50 million books sold worldwide

## GREEN STREET HOOLIGANS 3

Completed

MARKET PREMIERE



ACTION / MMA

Cast: Scott Adkins

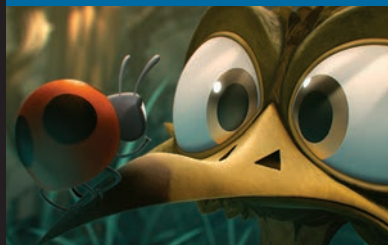
UK release: Lionsgate

SCREENING

Mon Nov 11th – 3pm – AMC Santa Monica 2

## GUS (3D)

In production



ANIMATION / ACTION ADVENTURE

Voice: Dakota Fanning, Seth Green

Director: Dominique Monfery, Chrisia De Vita

Producer: TeamTO

FIRST FOOTAGE available.

## THE LAST SHOWING

Post-production

NEW TITLE



PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

Cast: Robert Englund, Finn Jones, Emily Berrington

Writer/Director: Phil Hawkins

FIRST PROMO available

## JUNGLE SHUFFLE (3D)

Post-production



ANIMATION / ACTION ADVENTURE

Voice: Rob Schneider, Drake Bell

Producer: Wonderland Studios, Avikoo Studios

Korea release: CJ Entertainment

## TOMORROW (AKA OMNI)

Pre-production

NEW TITLE



SCI-FI ACTION

Writer/Director: Tristan Cornelius Versluis

Producer: Kate Glover

CONCEPT PROMO available

## THE REEF2: HIGH TIDE (3D)

Completed



ANIMATION / FAMILY

Voice: Rob Schneider, Drake Bell

120+ screen release in the UK

800+ screen release in Russia

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CO-FOUNDER, KILLER FILMS

# Christine Vachon

The prolific cutting-edge producer on how the indie world has changed, her Todd Haynes epiphany and being on the lookout for anything 'zeitgeisty'

By Nick Holdsworth

**C**HRISTINE VACHON HAS produced more than 80 films in a career spanning nearly 30 years, including Todd Haynes' *Boys Don't Cry*, which won Hilary Swank an Oscar for her performance as transgender teen Brandon Teena; *Velvet Goldmine*, Haynes' tribute to British glam rock; and, more recently, the Beat Generation tale *Kill Your Darlings*, directed by John Krokidas and starring Daniel Radcliffe as radical poet Allen Ginsberg. That film was shown at St. Petersburg's Side by Side LGBT International Film Festival, Russia's only event devoted to filmmakers from that community. Her early movies — such as Larry Clark's *Kids*, released in 1995, about an HIV-positive amoral skateboarder determined to deflower as many virgins as possible — were considered shocking when they were released, but with the passing of time and changing social mores, much of her work is now arguably part of the mainstream. Renowned for producing unusual, cutting-edge films — often with actors and directors new to the scene — the New York City native is the author of *Shooting to Kill*, a 1998 guide to making low-budget films. *THR* recently caught up with Vachon, 50, at the American Film Festival, an annual feast of indie fare in Wrocław, Poland, where she received its Indie Star Award.

**You've spent your career producing independent films, not the easiest world in which to work. How has it changed?**

Directors these days really have to understand the business of film; how making a film and being creative must work together with the financial side of things and yet still tell the story you want, how you want. In the U.S., directors have to be acutely aware of their audience; there is no system of subsidies like

in Europe. Filmmakers are starting to becoming more and more entrepreneurial, using Kickstarter, Indiegogo, etc. Now you are not just making a film but starting to build a community, identifying your audience much earlier in the process than before.

**What kind of shape is the indie world in now?**

In the early '90s, there was a sense that filmmakers were simply choosing to make movies; they were not asking permission. In many ways we've come full circle. People today are saying the same sort of thing, but they have access to much more than we had back then. Filmmakers are saying, "We just want to tell stories." And they don't have to be theatrical or in a 90-minute frame. The death of DVD and foreign sales — which used to be a major part of getting an indie movie financed — has drastically changed the business. But today, making movies is cheaper than ever. Digital filmmaking means much shorter shoots and lower budgets; it is definitely creating more opportunities. We are in a time of great changes. I cannot say how that will affect the stories we tell. You can choose to see this time as a glass half-empty or half-full. But people still keep managing to tell original stories. We used to reckon that a feature needed 35 shooting days; now you can do it in 20 to 25. Budgets are lower as a result, but that also means there is downward pressure on fees. As a producer, I have to work harder; we've produced 10 films since January last year.

**You've been Todd Haynes' producer for many years. How does that relationship work?**

Todd and I met at college [at Brown] and have worked together since soon after his first short,

the 40-minute film *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story*. If you've never seen it, I suggest you do. It's fantastic. [Because of a lawsuit by brother Richard Carpenter concerning music rights, seeing the film is a challenge. Vachon suggested it's possible to find it on the Internet]. I saw that film and it epitomized everything I wanted to do. I did not want Todd to ever produce anything again that does not involve me, and so far that has been the case. That was an epiphany for me, and I produced his debut feature, *Poison*, and have worked with him since. That won the Holy Grail for indie filmmakers, the Sundance Jury Prize. We've never repeated that. We work very well together. We have our own shorthand and know each other very well; it makes it easy to work together. We do not quarrel. I can come to him and say we've got a problem, and we just find a solution to it together.

Television is the new frontier for creative work. We worked together on the *Mildred Pierce* miniseries for HBO. It was like making a really long feature film. Now TV is where you go to do something with anti-heroes and ambiguous endings; stuff that people are talking about

in the office on Monday mornings. The talk is about, "Did you see the finale of *Breaking Bad*?" not, "Do you like the new *Transformers*?"

**What advice do you have for young producers who are trying to gain attention for a first-time director?**

Make sure you've got a fantastic short film. You must be able to articulate effectively what they want to do. *Kill Your Darlings* took more than five years to bring to the screen; the need to be able to make an argument for your film does not diminish. I look for scripts that have parts that are attractive to cast, ones that are challenging and imaginative for actors. So many films are now cast-driven. Engage with your audience. American filmmakers must always think about that.

**What do you want to do next?**

We are looking to do more episodic TV; that is something I am very excited about. I am excited about Todd's new film, *Carol* [a 1950s-set drama starring Rooney Mara and Cate Blanchett], and anything that's "zeitgeisty." And I am always happy to executive produce projects, as in that way I can help smaller movies happen. *THR*



"As a producer, I have to work harder," Vachon says. "We've produced 10 films since January last year."



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# REVIEWS

Stiller's dazed confusion as to how he's become so meek gives heart to his understated performance.

AFI FEST



## The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

**It's more of an acquired taste than the average Ben Stiller comedy, but this eccentric family-friendly entry should find a significant core of admirers** BY DAVID ROONEY

**A**LYRICAL COMIC FABLE ABOUT RELEASING THE exceptional qualities trapped within ordinary people, Ben Stiller's *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* expands upon the classic James Thurber short story, updating it to the age of corporate downsizing and dehumanizing job elimination. Premiering at the New York Film Festival ahead of Fox's wide Christmas Day release, the film's pleasures may be too minor-key and its pace too meandering to conquer the mainstream. But audiences willing to tune in to its blend of surreal fantasy and poignancy will be rewarded.

Originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1939, Thurber's 2 1/2-page story entered the American lexicon; the title character's name became a byword for an ineffectual person who indulges in escapist heroic day-dreaming. After contributing script notes that went unused, Thurber distanced himself from the 1947 film version, which became a sideshow for Danny Kaye to exhibit his gifts in comedic or musical vignettes that more often than not brought the story to a halt.

The remake project has kicked around for years, at various times attracting interest from directors including Steven Spielberg and Ron Howard. And while Stiller's version is too tonally diffuse to be fully satisfying, it's nonetheless a valid take on the material, using Thurber's story more as a jumping-off point than a solid foundation.

Screenwriter Steven Conrad departs from both the prose source and the previous film in this new adaptation. He maintains the core theme of

the liberating power of the imagination but tethers even Walter's most improbable fantasies to the real potential within him to fully engage with the world and be the kind of man he always dreamed of being. Doubling as director and lead actor, Stiller imbues the character with the profound yearning and gnawing frustration of a man hijacked by melancholy circumstance from being a cool kid in his youth to a meek drone in adult life.

Walter works at a contemporary incarnation of *Life* magazine, the office interiors of which are re-created with *Mad Men*-like retro detailing by production designer Jeff Mann. The building's sterile corridors contrast with the blown-up covers depicting great men and women and majestic images, all of which feed Walter's active fantasy life.

In reality, he lacks the nerve to speak to Cheryl (Kristen Wiig), a co-worker and recently separated mother who has caught his eye. But with new owners transitioning from print to digital and a supercilious incoming manager (Adam Scott) seeking to cut jobs, Walter's window of opportunity to make a move is closing. When he inadvertently loses a negative from the magazine's enigmatic star photojournalist, Sean O'Connell, that's been designated for the final issue's cover, Walter is forced to take action.

Elevated by the spectacular location work of cinematographer Stuart Dryburgh, Walter's journey takes him first to Greenland and from there to volcanic Iceland. In a second trip, he travels to the Upper Himalayas, where he tracks down O'Connell (an expertly judged extended cameo by Sean Penn), gleans a fresh perspective on living in the moment and gets to play soccer with sherpas.

Theodore Shapiro's score is deftly augmented with symphonic indie alt-rock and beautiful vocal tracks by neo-folkie Jose Gonzalez, breathing epic scope into what's at heart a New York fairy tale. While this dual-

ity is not entirely germane to the material, there's enough idiosyncratic charm in the treatment to ride over the languorous patches of a movie that pushes close to two hours.

A jokey reference to *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* at one point underlines some similarities to that film, which also mushroomed out of a work of short fiction by an iconic American writer working in a fabulist vein. Stiller's film is altogether less grandiose and less saccharine, its sweetness emerging without undue strain. The gradual shift by which lonely Walter's fantasies recede as his real life becomes more dynamic is modulated with disarming gentleness.

More or less playing straight man, Wiig gives a quiet, appealing performance as a woman no less thwarted by the burdens of everyday existence than Walter. Shirley MacLaine lends a welcome grounded presence to Walter's mother, and Patton Oswalt makes an amusing appearance as an eHarmony technician.

Befitting a film in which the hero's imaginary acts of derring-do are loosely rooted in reality, the sharp CGI sequences are integrated into the naturalistic mainframe, with crisp, bold colors giving a heightened look to the New York locations.

**Cast** Ben Stiller, Kristen Wiig, Shirley MacLaine, Adam Scott, Sean Penn  
**Director** Ben Stiller

114 minutes



# Her

**Spike Jonze's drama, starring Joaquin Phoenix and Scarlett Johansson, ponders the nature of love in the encroaching virtual world** BY TODD MCCARTHY

Visionary and traditional, wispy and soulful, tender and cool, Spike Jonze's *Her* ponders the nature of love in the encroaching virtual world and dares to ask the question of what might be preferable, a romantic relationship with a human being or an electronic one that can be designed to provide more intimacy and satisfaction than real people can reliably manage. Taking place tomorrow or perhaps the day after that, this is a probing, inquisitive work of a very high order, though it goes a bit slack in the final third and concludes rather conventionally compared to much that has come before. A film that stands apart from anything else on the horizon in many ways, it will generate an ardent following, which Warner Bros. can only hope will be vocal and excitable enough to make this a must-see for anyone who pretends to be interested in something different.

In terms of ethereal tone, offbeat romanticism and evanescent stylistic flourishes, the film that bears some comparison to *Her* is *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, which dealt with the search for love, its memory or its prospect in a similarly fleeting, lightly heartbreaking manner. The theme and dramatic drive behind Jonze's original screenplay, the search for love and the need to "only connect," is as old as time, but he embraces it in a speculative way that feels pertinent to the moment and captures the emotional malaise of a future just an intriguing step or two ahead of contemporary reality.

Set in a downtown Los Angeles as thick with high-rises as Manhattan, as modernistic as Shanghai and populated exclusively with citizens both gainfully employed and well dressed (an optimistic if unplanned antidote to the recent *Elysium*), the film focuses intently upon Theodore (Joaquin Phoenix), who is very good at his job, that of writing eloquent, moving, heartfelt letters for others who aren't up to the task; he's a sort of Cyrano for all seasons. With his glasses,

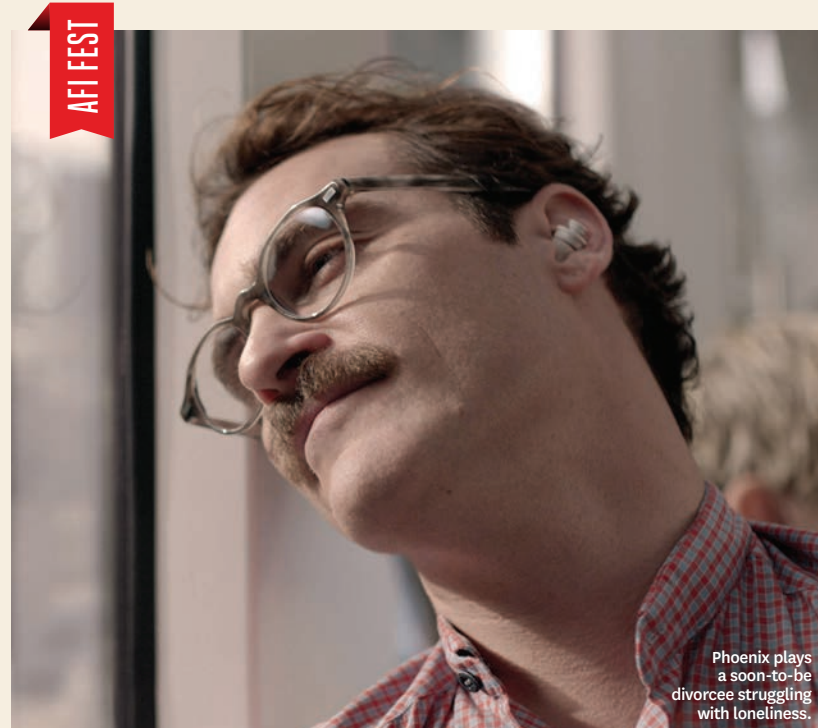
mustache and high-hitched trousers with no belt (the era's one bad fashion fad), he's a bit of a neatnik and a nerd but acutely attuned to people's inner feelings.

As it will for two hours, the camera stays very close to this well-mannered, proper fellow, who goes home to his upper-floor apartment to play a life-sized 3D video game featuring a foul-mouthed cartoon character who insults him — a poor substitute for his wife (Rooney Mara), who's divorcing him. Quick and funny anonymous phone sex follows, but Theodore then explores a new electronic offering, an operating system (OS1) that absorbs information and adapts so fast that the resulting conversation matches anything real life can offer. Or — and this is the part that's both seductive and unnerving — it might be even better.

The OS Theodore prescribes to calls itself Samantha. With a vivacious female voice that breaks attractively but also has an inviting deeper register, "she" explains that she has intuition, is constantly evolving and can converse so well because she has total recall and instantaneous adaptability. Samantha laughs, makes jokes, commiserates, advises and even proofreads one of his letters. Based on their (programmed) rapport, Samantha very quickly defines what Theodore is looking for in a woman, even if he'll never know what the viewer knows, that this inviting voice belongs to Scarlett Johansson.

The man's complicity with this new confidant is only increased after an intense and intensely disappointing blind date with a stunning and initially flirtatious young lady (a vital Olivia Wilde). Not only is Samantha endlessly cooperative and (literally) interactive, but her emotions seemingly escalate at the same pace as his own.

Even up to this point, less than an hour in, the film provokes many questions and musings. Can an artificial being who's "made for you" provide greater fulfillment than a flesh-and-blood human of



more erratic capacities? Is it not ideal to have someone there for you whenever you want and then not when you prefer to be alone? Does a strictly verbal relationship sustain a desirable level of fantasy while holding reality at bay? Does a virtual romance have equal value to a real one? Because Theodore and Samantha get along so well, do we, as an audience, root for this relationship to "work out"? Isn't this electronic rapport a lot better than Ryan Gosling's relationship with an inflatable doll in *Lars and the Real Girl*? Does virtual marriage constitute the next legislative frontier?

Where Jonze goes with his intriguing exploration in the second half is both sobering and a tad soft. It's also the place where you realize that Phoenix's Theodore is at the center of every scene and, due to the fact that his confidant doesn't corporeally exist, is often the only one onscreen for extended periods. This fact has compelled the director to get Theodore out of the house, so to speak, and keep him on the move, which is what provides the film with the measure of forward momentum it possesses. All Theodore needs to talk to Samantha is a small earpiece, so he often converses while walking through the city (only in the most fabulously scenic sections), on the subway, by the beach, later on a fast train (in what must have been the credited Chinese part of the shoot) and hiking through a forest. When he is surrounded by other solitaires engaged in deep conversation, *Her* resembles nothing so much as the

final scenes of the film version of *Fahrenheit 451* in which society's rebels promenade about while devotedly reciting from banned books they've memorized.

Although the final stretch is devoted to the resolution of Theodore and Samantha's intimate relationship, the dramatic limitations of the film's presentational one-sidedness become rather too noticeable as the two-hour mark approaches. The director's visual panache, live-wire technical skills and beguilingly offbeat musical instincts work overtime to paper over what can only be conveyed in extended conversation. (Not collaborating with cinematographer Lance Accord for the first time, Jonze benefits from great work behind the camera by Hoyte van Hoytema, while the score by Arcade Fire casts a spell of its own.) The feeling at the end is that of a provocative if fragile concept extended somewhat beyond its natural breaking point.

In a tender about-face from his fearsome performance in *The Master*, Phoenix here is enchantingly open, vulnerable, sweet-natured and yearning for emotional completion. Accoutered to look both goofy and cool, he is nonetheless appealing, and the actor exhibits an unprecedented openness that is entirely winning.

**Cast** Joaquin Phoenix, Amy Adams, Rooney Mara, Olivia Wilde, Chris Pratt, Matt Letscher, Portia Doubleday, Scarlett Johansson  
**Director** Spike Jonze  
126 minutes



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Pellegrino, left, effectively bullies White into some very bad decisions.

## We Gotta Get Out of This Place

Brothers Zeke and Simon Hawkins pay homage to pulp crime novelist Jim Thompson in their gritty debut feature, set in a dead-end Texas cotton mill town **BY DAVID ROONEY**

The 1965 hit song by The Animals that supplies the title is never heard in *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*. But the urgency behind its lyrics about a guy and his girl fleeing toward a better life, “if it’s the last thing we ever do,” fits this Lone Star State noir to a T. In their stylish feature debut, sibling co-directors Zeke and Simon Hawkins indulge in bad-boy posturing and lurid psychopath excess. But this juicy tale of a reckless robbery and its spiraling bloody aftermath is enjoyably overripe pulp, steeped in grubby textures and flavorful atmosphere.

Screenwriter Dutch Southern has a name that sounds like an Elmore Leonard character, but his literary inspiration is hardboiled crime maestro Jim Thompson.

The late writer is name-checked early on by paperback mystery enthusiast Sue (Mackenzie Davis). She’s about to leave behind her boyfriend BJ (Logan Huffman) in their dead-end cotton mill hometown near Corpus Christi and head off to college with BJ’s best friend Bobby (Jeremy Allen White). In an on-the-nose set-up over biscuits and gravy at the local diner, Sue quotes Thompson’s theory that there are 32 ways to write a story, but only one plot: Things are not what they seem.

While BJ is a rascally hunk overflowing with testosterone, it’s one of those familiar small-town incongruities that a smart gal like Sue has stuck with such a brainless loser this long. He’s also overbearing with his more sensitive buddy, but Bobby’s motives for putting up with the

jerk are clear in the doe-eyed glances he keeps shooting at Sue.

When BJ flashes a wad of cash and insists they hit the city for a farewell blowout weekend before college, Sue and Bobby comply, only later questioning where the money came from. Turns out it was stolen, along with a gun, out of the office safe of BJ’s boss at the cotton farm, Giff (Mark Pellegrino). BJ remains silent while Giff tries to kick a confession out of an innocent Mexican worker, but Bobby claims responsibility for the robbery in a bid to save the man’s life.

Ascertaining that BJ, Bobby and Sue all burned through the cash, which actually belonged to a money-laundering gangster named Big Red (William Devane), Giff scares them into pulling a heist at the mill offices to get back the \$20,000 and a whole lot more. But when Bobby and Sue sleep together and BJ gets wise, the double-crosses and deceptions start stacking up.

In one sharp scene, Bobby attempts to go to the cops but gets a cryptic warning to keep his mouth shut from the corrupt sheriff (Jon Gries). There’s an encroaching sense of the dangerous underbelly of crime and violence in this sleepy town, stuck in the middle of a stark, flat landscape on which wind turbines slowly rotate but nobody seems to be going anyplace.

BJ shows no evidence of thinking through his actions and certainly no sign of remorse for the mess he started. But the film insinuates that his malicious intent is shaped not only by jeal-

ousy over Sue and Bobby’s betrayal, but also by the corrosive awareness that unlike them, he’s not resourceful enough to find a way out of the suffocating town. He tells Sue that he knows who he is, what he wants and how to get it, but this seems more like braggadocio than real conviction.

While the dialogue is overwritten at times, the sinewy plotting in Southern’s script crackles along, gradually making it clear why Giff would put such a big-money job in the hands of three green teens despite the potential for things to go wrong. Pellegrino plays the role with such lip-smacking redneck perversity and blithe brutality that it’s almost conceivable he would do it for kicks.

When he’s not physically intimidating his pawns, Giff has a way with words that throws them off-balance. He’s an over-the-top villain, and if he’s perhaps too obviously shaped by the filmmakers’ favorite movie and prose fiction, Giff is true to the inspiration of Thompson, whose killing machines weren’t exactly models of restraint.

Looking like a thicker-set, greasier Zac Efron, Huffman makes all the right moves at first. But the script pushes the loose cannon too quickly into outright villainy in a film that already has a bad guy too big for company. That also cramps the style of Devane when Big Red turns up late in the action. White and in particular Davis register more effectively in the quieter roles. It’s Sue’s balance of surface vulnerability hiding serious smarts that makes the twistier plot turns work, even if the escalating violence of the climax almost veers into pastiche.

Whatever its flaws, the movie looks and sounds terrific. The muted tones of cinematographer Jeff Bierman’s desolate widescreen vistas and grainy, inventively framed interiors, shot using the Red Epic, give way at key points to bursts of heightened color and hot light as the characters run through plans and counterplans. And Jonathan Keevil’s score, with its moody acoustic themes and scratchy guitar picking, is an ideal musical complement to the physical settings.

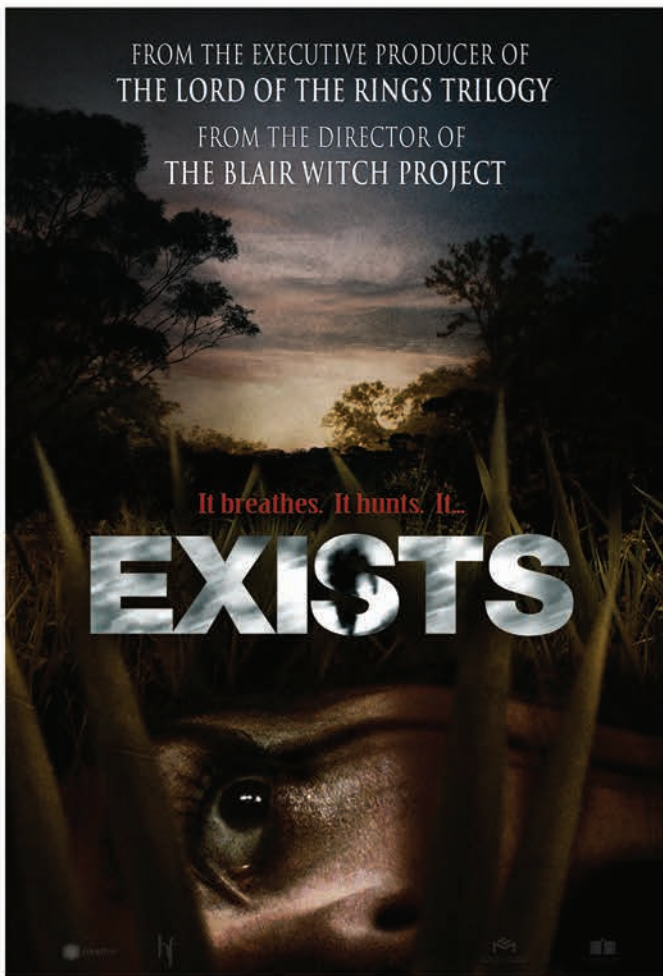
It’s nowhere near the pantheon of razor-sharp neo-noirs like Carl Franklin’s *One False Move*, Sam Raimi’s *A Simple Plan* or any of the excursions into neighboring territory by another pair of filmmaking brothers, the Coens. But *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* is lean, mean and highly watchable — a genre exercise that introduces a promising directing team who already show considerable command of their craft.

**Sales** *Lightning Entertainment*

**Cast** *Jeremy Allen White, Logan Huffman, Mackenzie Davis, Mark Pellegrino, William Devane, Jon Gries*

**Directors** *Zeke Hawkins, Simon Hawkins*  
91 minutes





# EXISTS

**SCREENING TOMORROW**  
**SUNDAY, NOV 10 AT 11:00AM**  
 AMC Santa Monica 5

**SYNOPSIS:** Five friends take off for the deep woods of Texas for an epic party weekend. But once there, they come face to face with a vicious beast that may in fact be the legendary Bigfoot. As they fight for survival, they unlock a shocking truth behind a terrifying myth.

**DIRECTOR:** Eduardo Sánchez (*The Blair Witch Project*)

**WRITER:** Jamie Nash

**PRODUCERS:** Mark Ordesky (*The Lord of the Rings*), Jane Fleming (*Frozen Ground*), Robin Cowie (*The Blair Witch Project*), Andy Jenkins

**GENRE:** Horror

## SOME VELVET MORNING

**SCREENING TODAY**  
**SATURDAY, NOV 9, 11:00AM**  
 Fairmont 5

**SYNOPSIS:** When Fred arrives at Velvet's doorstep – suitcases in tow – and tells her that he has finally left his wife to be with her, his hopes for a new beginning are crushed as Velvet is having none of it. What follows is a passionate conversation that reveals the twisted heart of a fascinating relationship.

**WRITER/DIRECTOR:** Neil LaBute (*Lakeview Terrace*)

**CAST:** Stanley Tucci, Alice Eve

**PRODUCERS:** Tim Harms, Daryl Freimark (*Hairspray*), Michael Corrente, Trent Othick, David Zander (*Spring Breakers*)

**GENRE:** Drama



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# Transit

**Hannah Espia's directorial debut — and Phillippine Oscar entry — effectively chronicles the lives of five Filipinos adapting to life in Israel** BY CLARENCE TSUI

One of the most memorable conversations in the Israel-set migrant-workers drama *Transit* sees a group of Filipino domestic workers talking about how their offspring's minds are shaped growing up as an alien in a foreign land. In order to conceal their illegitimate-resident status, the women say, children grow up being taught to lie and hide so as to avoid deportation back to the Philippines.

This unnerving revelation is an illustration of the strongest suit of Hannah Espia's directorial debut. Working through the lives of five Filipinos (or four and a half, as one of them was born with Israeli blood) living in Tel Aviv, *Transit* — freshly anointed as the Philippines' official submission for the best foreign-language film Oscar — is at its most powerful when it touches on the lives of the confused youngsters who find themselves living in the shadow of their parents' anxiety and caught in between conflicting identities.

Eschewing a linear approach, *Transit* zeroes in on how his five protagonists experience more or less the same period in time, with certain scenes repeated from a different angle so as to focus on how they react to reality from varying perspectives. But before the youngsters' tales take over, *Transit* still has to set the scene with the time-honored accounts of Filipino laborers struggling abroad. First off is Janet (Irma Adlawan), Yael's domestic-helper mother whose comparatively calm working environment belies her constant fear of being deported for having overstayed on her expired work visa; then comes her boyfriend Moises (Ping Medina), who is working against the odds to keep his son from being deported under a new law that requires the children of immigrant workers to leave Israel.

These two episodes, alongside the third one about newly arrived young maid Tina (Mercedes Ca-



Alvarez dreams of a better life.

bral), retreads many an anecdote made familiar with the Philippines' OFW (Overseas Filipino Workers) films. Espia flirts with the melodramatic visual and narrative tropes of that mainstream subgenre, and in the early scenes the film betrays its flaws.

But the further Espia goes down the age ladder, the better *Transit* becomes: There's more of a formalist rigor to the film (which was largely shot on handheld cameras) as the film gradually brings the five lives onto the same narrative map, with two of the children — 4-year-old Joshua, brought to life by a sparkling Marc Justine Alvarez, and teenage Yael, played by Jasmine Curtis-Smith — making uncertain steps in opening up their

own distinct multicultural futures. Yael, whose estranged father is Israeli and who only speaks Hebrew, embarks on a romance with a local boy, and Joshua gleefully studies the Torah under the aegis of his father's cuddly employer. With the boy eventually pondering over his future in the Bangkok airport — a final shot that mirrors the one opening the film — *Transit* attains a level of contemplation and visual stillness that works well with its title, with Espia channeling the melancholy of in-betweeners without the usual histrionics.

**Sales** *Electric Entertainment*  
**Cast** *Irma Adlawan, Ping Medina*  
**Director** *Hannah Espia*  
*92 minutes*

# Mary Queen of Scots

**Thomas Imbach's serious-minded biopic goes too much by the history book**

BY BOYD VAN HOELJ

The story of Mary Stuart gets another cinematic workout in *Mary Queen of Scots* from Swiss director Thomas Imbach, who adapts Austrian author Stefan Zweig's biography "Mary Queen of Scotland" and the Isles into an intimate and serious-minded biopic that never quite gets into the head of the protagonist.

Delicately featured French actress Camille Rutherford (*Low Life*) stars as the titular Queen, but her delivery, in French and English, is often stilted as she struggles to illuminate the complexity of her character in the way Zweig, partly inspired by the writings of his fellow Viennese contemporary, Sigmund Freud, did. The young actress is not aided by a middling screenplay by Imbach, Andrea Staka (who also produced) and Eduard Habsburg, which favors historical chronology over psychological insight — though the writers do have the good sense to end the film before Mary's famous head is chopped off.

Mary's short marriage to the young French dauphin, and then king, Francois II (Sylvain

Levitte, appropriately sickly), in 1558, is done away with in a quick sequence that forms something of a prologue to the Frenchified Queen's return to Scotland, where she settles after her husband's untimely demise.

In one of the film's nicest touches, the Catholic Queen of Scotland constantly writes letters to her cousin and rival, the Protestant Elizabeth I of England, in which she confesses her fears and hopes. The letters can be heard in voice-over, and the figure of Elizabeth becomes an almost spectral presence that haunts Mary,



Rutherford struggles against royal politics.

as the English queen's ambassadors bring along a new painted portrait of their ruler with every reply they convey (they never met in real life). Mary's favorite courtier, the puppeteer Rizzio (Mehdi Dehbi, giving the film's standout performance), also uses dolls of the rival queens for his improvised plays, literally turning the complicated political games into child's play (and bringing those who've forgotten their high-school history lessons quickly up to speed).

But Imbach seems too much in thrall of the historical record, with all its scheming noblemen, religious fanatics and husbands (Welsh actor Aneurin Barnard especially impresses as her obsessed and wild-eyed second hubby, Lord Darnley), to be able to concentrate on what all these events and people mean for his protagonist, how they inform her personality or feed into her emotions and actions.

Overall, the assembly of the film is rather plain, with only the occasionally dissonant score from Russian composer Sofia Gubaidulina standing out.

**Sales** *Picture Three International GMBH*  
**Cast** *Camille Rutherford, Mehdi Dehbi, Sean Biggerstaff*  
**Director** *Thomas Imbach*  
*120 minutes*



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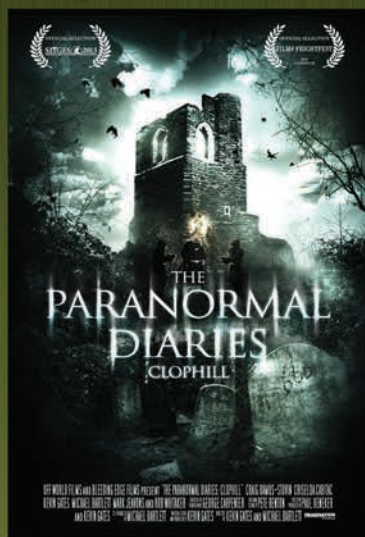
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Bijvoet slowly takes control of a suburban family.

## Borgman

A typically odd offering from Alex van Warmerdam, its grimness leavened by nasty humor BY DAVID ROONEY

The first Dutch feature in the main Cannes competition in 38 years, *Borgman* is laced with Alex van Warmerdam's characteristically droll humor but sees the writer-director venturing into darker, more unsettling waters. A quirky study of the unrelenting grip of evil, the film is beautifully made, though stronger in its intriguing setup than its muddy resolution. Still, this is an engrossing and original work that should find an international niche.

Since making a mark in the Netherlands with his 1986 feature debut *Abel* and then cracking the festival circuit in 1992 with *The Northernners*, van Warmerdam has assembled a richly idiosyncratic body of work, most of which he also appears in with his wife Annet Malherbe. In films like *The Dress*, *Little Tony* and *Grimm*, he brings a deadpan observational style to seemingly ordinary lowlanders, subjecting them to absurd situations, sticky psychological challenges and simmering threats of violence.

In *Borgman*'s terrific opening, a priest and two other armed men stalk the woods where Borgman (Jan Bijvoet) is sleeping in a make-shift underground hideout. Narrowly dodging a massive spike to the head, he escapes through a burrow and warns his cohorts Pascal (Tom Dewispeleare) and Ludwig (van Warmerdam), resting, vampire-style, in similar dugouts.

Calling himself Anton and then later Camiel, bedraggled Borgman goes knocking on doors in an upscale residential area, asking to come inside and take a bath. He gets an abrupt refusal from hot-tempered businessman Richard (Jeroen Perceval), who then brutally beats him after Borgman insists that he knows the man's wife, Marina (Hadewych Minis). Feeling remorseful over her husband's treatment of him, Marina secretly allows Borgman to clean up, giving him food and shelter in their guest cottage. The nod to *Boudou Saved From Drowning* seems intentional, but it's a false clue as to where the film is headed.

The film's most gripping developments are in the central section in which Borgman quietly exercises his subliminal mind control over Marina, her three young children and, eventually, Richard. Ludwig and Pascal reappear, with the latter casting a spell on the kids' Danish nanny Stine (Sara Hjort Ditlevsen).

While the film ultimately is not as satisfying as it promises to be for much of the duration, it remains bracingly creepy and off-kilter. Performances are solid throughout, particularly from Minis and Flemish actor Bijvoet. With a craggy-faced, sad-eyed seriousness that at times gives him a resemblance to Christoph Waltz, he makes a charismatic figurehead for the march of evil.

**Sales** Fortissimo Films

**Cast** Jan Bijvoet, Hadewych Minis, Jeroen Perceval

**Director** Alex van Warmerdam // 113 minutes

## Starred Up

Young actor Jack O'Connell is the main attraction in this tough British drama BY TODD MCCARTHY

Some years from now, *Starred Up*, a rough, violent and, to American ears, half-indecipherable British prison drama, will be remembered as the film that announced a new star, Jack O'Connell. A handsome, tautly built powder keg with watchful animal eyes, he's been around for a while on the U.K. TV series *Skins* and in supporting roles, but his performance here as an ultra-violent, anti-social kid in the slammer shows off the actor's James Cagney-like bantam-cock vitality and quicksilver mood changes. One can see why Angelina Jolie has cast him as the lead in her forthcoming film version of the best-selling survival tale *Unbroken*. As for *Starred Up* itself, it's potent but somewhat familiar stuff, interesting for its highly detailed picture of British prison life but in need of subtitles if it hopes to move beyond festivals in the U.S.

The most cinematically arresting scene orchestrated by director David Mackenzie (the engagingly randy *Young Adam*, the sleazily randy *Spread*) is undoubtedly the opening, which vividly documents the full processing of young Eric (O'Connell) into the prison (shot at an actual facility in Belfast), through his polite strip search, change into prison garb, escort through innumerable doors and down assorted hallways until his arrival at a solo cell in the high-risk section.

All the same, Eric is pretty used to it, having spent most of his young life in some sort of state institution due to his mother's death and his father's long incarceration. The title refers to ultra-dangerous under-21 prisoners being promoted to adult facilities, and Eric would seem to qualify; it takes several guards to subdue him during his violent outbursts, which are frequent, and he knows every trick in the book — greasing himself, even clamping his teeth down on someone's privates through his pants — to get the upper hand in fights.

Eric gets in temporary hot water with the black prisoners after he practically kills one of them in a one-on-one fight and has trouble



O'Connell has a very short fuse.

sitting still during group therapy sessions run by an ineffectual volunteer (Rupert Friend). But the central thrust of the script by Jonathan Asser, himself a former prison counselor, stems from the unpredictable dynamic between Eric and his father Neville (a very good Ben Mendelsohn), who's detained here as well. It's easy to see where Eric's belligerent, hot-tempered ways came from, even if the older man may not be as muscled as he used to be.

The story's basic dynamics are clear enough because they're played out in such obvious physical terms, so the viewer can pick up the gist of things. However, it's impossible to avoid thinking that one is missing many nuances and meanings, not only due to the thick, slang-ridden accents, but because of references, prison-based and otherwise, that inevitably shoot right past anyone not attuned to this sort of talk.

But there's always O'Connell, whose performance is so volatile and scary that you never know when he'll pop next and what he might do. He's more than street-smart, he's jailhouse-smart; the pen is Nick's natural turf, and even if he doesn't own it, he knows how to use it and have his way there far better than most long-timers. The actor would seem to have live wires running through his body, and it should be interesting to follow his career from here on.

**Sales** Independent

**Cast** Jack O'Connell, Ben Mendelsohn, Rupert Friend, Sam Spruell

**Director** David Mackenzie  
105 minutes



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## REVIEWS



Ronan gets gothy in Macdonald's latest film.

## How I Live Now

Saoirse Ronan stars in this derivative teen romance with an apocalyptic twist BY TODD MCCARTHY

What starts as potentially interesting apocalyptic speculative fiction devolves into dreary sub-*Hunger Games* survivalism and banal teen romance in *How I Live Now*. Irish actress Saoirse Ronan is almost always worth watching, but not especially in this drippy outing, in which she morphs from sullen brat to can-do wilderness heroine under the influence of an attractive red-headed hawk trainer. Commercial prospects look modest.

Director Kevin Macdonald's scene-setting is mildly intriguing, if mostly because so much information is withheld in this adaptation of a novel by Meg Rosoff. Disagreeable American punk Daisy (Ronan) unwillingly arrives in the U.K. to stay at a distant cousins' rural house, a chaotic place where the brood consists of enthusiastic 14-year-old Isaac (Tom Holland), much younger Piper (Harley Bird), elusive, good-looking Eddie (George MacKay) and a mom (Anna Chancellor) who quickly exits to Geneva, where she is to participate in the "peace process."

Indeed, the summer air is thick with foreboding. "There's going to be World War III," little Piper announces as if informing everyone of the weather. There's been a big explosion in Paris, signs of a military presence dot the countryside, and Isaac makes vague reference to an imminent fascist regime.

Sure enough, the summer soon turns to winter — nuclear winter, in fact — as white dust descends upon the land after a reported nuke attack in London. Emergency martial law is declared with

imminent evacuation to follow, but Daisy has by now exchanged enough meaningful glances with Eddie that when she, a foreigner, is offered a ticket back to the U.S., she refuses it to stay with the boy.

From this low-key and moderately promising set-up, *How I Live Now* descends into by-the-book romantic longing and inane survival melodrama flecked by some arresting doomsdayish imagery. With boys and girls separated by the army, Eddie is carted off after stupidly provoking some soldiers, while Daisy and little Piper flee a forced-labor farm to chase through the endless forests looking for Eddie, as if they'd have a clue how to find him. Worse still, the girls are boring together; Piper is simply an irritant to the besotted Daisy.

With the exception of one well-conceived scene involving piled-up bodies at an isolated camp, the film's final third is a drag and concerned with nothing but insipid teen longing; there are no fresh ideas here. Stylistically, it's filmed and edited in a scatter-shot way that employs no consistent visual approach.

As she pushes through adolescence toward 20, Ronan is acquiring an increasingly chameleonesque beauty; she resembles Lindsay Lohan one moment, a young Elizabeth Taylor the next. This is far from her finest hour, but she continues to impress.

**Cast** Saoirse Ronan, George MacKay, Tom Holland, Harley Bird  
**Director** Kevin Macdonald  
101 minutes



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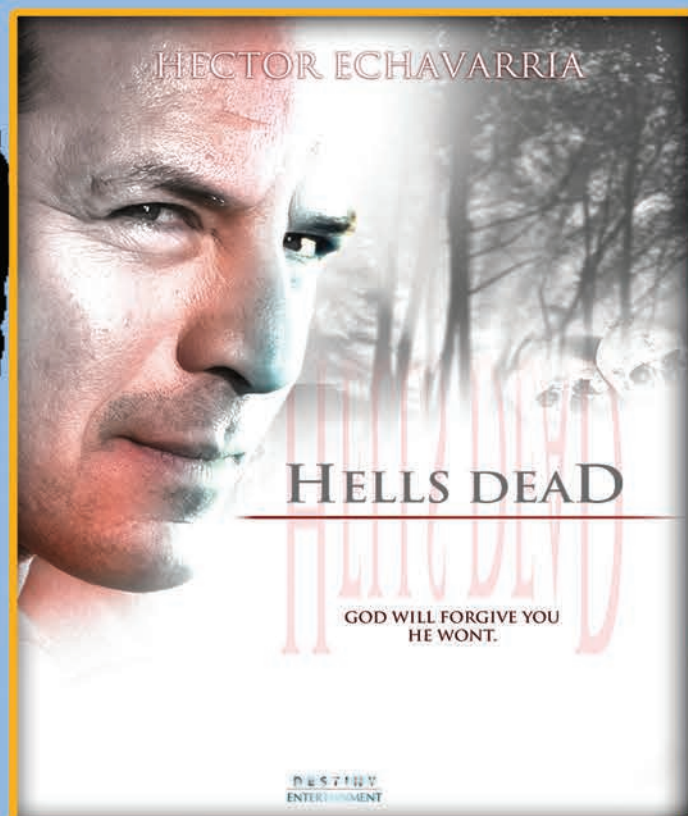
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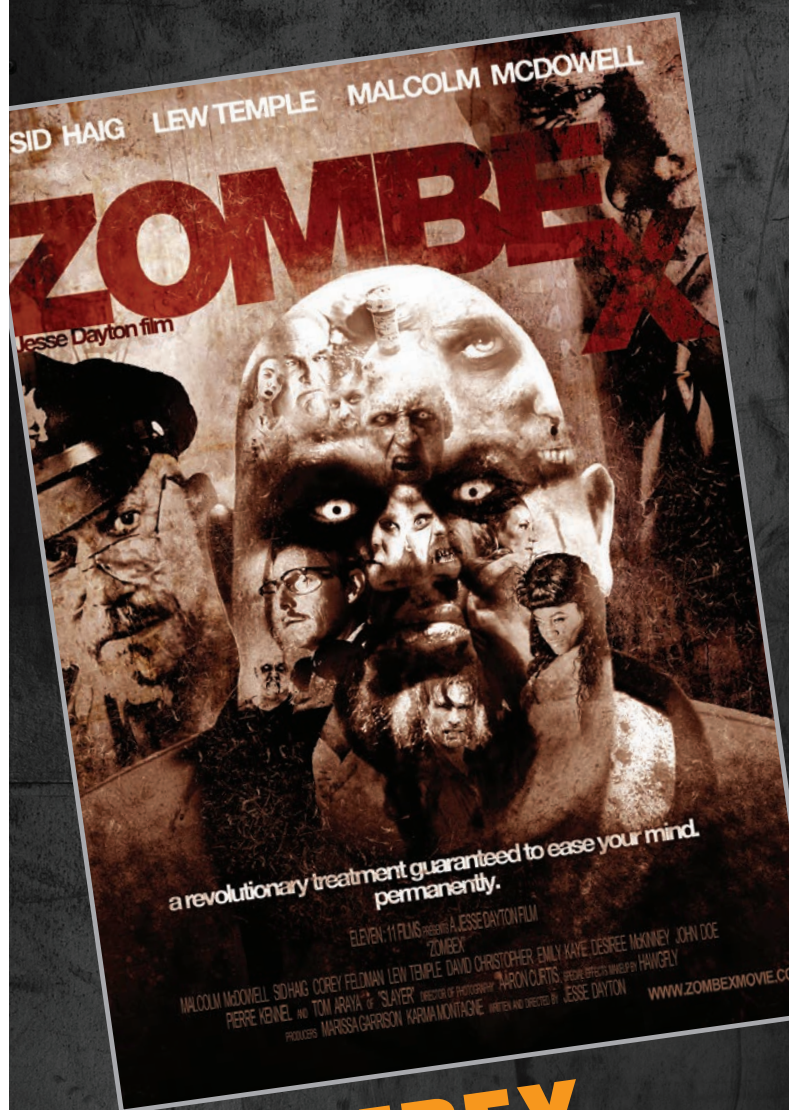


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## REVIEWS

# A Birder's Guide to Everything

A teen searches for an extinct Labrador Duck in Rob Meyer's feature debut **BY JOHN DEFORE**



From left: Chang, Wolff and Smit-McPhee are on the lookout.

A teen tries to keep his dead mother's memory alive by embracing her ornithological obsessions in Rob Meyer's *A Birder's Guide to Everything*, leading to an impromptu bird hunt that threatens to demolish his relationship with his surviving parent. Appearances by James Le Gros and Ben Kingsley in supporting roles should attract attention to this heartfelt film, whose familiar emotional beats shouldn't prevent it from being enjoyed by viewers who share its passions.

David (Kodi Smit-McPhee), still grieving two years after his mom's death, resents the happiness his father (LeGros) has found with the nurse who cared for her (Daniela Lavender). The couple will be married tomorrow, with David the reluctant best man.

But when David spots what may be a species of duck believed extinct for more than 100 years, he and The Young Birders Society — two bird-crazy boys and new recruit Ellen (Katie Chang), whose camera is needed to document the discovery — steal a cousin's car to try to track it to the next stop on its migratory path. The expedition will surely keep David from the wedding and may put him at odds with legendary birder Lawrence Konrad, who

offers friendly advice at first but is tempted to steal the glory of their find. (As Konrad, Kingsley gnaws at the scenery less avidly than he often has recently.)

The quartet of high schoolers is a fairly stock crew: the uptight Asian (Michael Chen), the hormonal joker (Alex Wolff) and the bright-eyed love interest (Chang), all foils to Smit-McPhee's shy late-bloomer. But each actor fills his/her role nicely, and they have enough chemistry to animate the routine pitfalls this road trip has in store for them.

The picture offers fewer bird sightings than enthusiasts might expect, but Meyer and Luke Matheny's script is full of the kind of nitpicky detail one hears when birders converse and milks some life lessons out of philosophical differences between "listers" and "watchers." Le Gros, as a man who thinks he's doing right by his son but is tone deaf to his emotional needs, helps ground the domestic side of things, lest the pursuit of a Labrador Duck obscure the real source of our wounded hero's fixations.

**Cast** Ben Kingsley, James Le Gros, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Katie Chang  
**Director** Rob Meyer  
**86 minutes**



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# AFM SCREENING GUIDE

## TODAY

**8:45 AM** AMC Santa Monica #3, *The Devil's Violinist*, Beta Cinema, 122 mins.; Fairmont #4, *Walesa. Man of Hope*, Films Distribution, 118 mins.

**9:00 AM** AMC Santa Monica #1, *Nobody Owns Me*, Svensk Filmindustri, AB, 109 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #4, *Coherence*, Independent, 88 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, *Djinn*, Fortissimo Films, 90 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #6, *Turning Tide*, Gaumont, 96 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #7, *Amazonia*, Le Pacte, 85 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, *How I Live Now*, Protagonist Pictures, 101 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #3, *In Darkness We Fall*, Filmix International, 80 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, *Jack and the Cuckoo-Clock Heart*, EuropaCorp, 95 mins.; Doubletree #1, *The Three Musketeers*, PLANETA INFORM, 119 mins.; Fairmont #1, *The Anderssons in Greece*, Sola Media GmbH, 90 mins.; Fairmont #2, *Fly Colt Fly*, Stealth Media Group, 80 mins.; Fairmont #3, *Femme: Women Healing The World*, Vision Films, 90 mins.; Fairmont #5, *Perfect Sisters*, Recreation, 100 mins.; Laemmle Monica #1, *The Stag*, Metro International Entertainment, 94 mins.; Laemmle Monica #3, *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby: Him & Her*, Myriad Pictures, 190 mins.; Loews #1, *McCanick*, Bleiberg Entertainment, 96 mins.; Loews #2, *Dumbbells*, Red Sea Media, 100 mins.; Ocean Screening, *Mary Queen of Scots*, Picture Tree International GmbH, 120 mins.

**11:00 AM** AMC Santa Monica #1, *Felony*, The Solution Entertainment Group, 106 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #2, *Wolf Creek 2*, Darlight, 106 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #3, *The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet*, Gaumont, 105 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #4, *1*, Sierra/Affinity, 97 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, *V8 - Start Your Engines!*, ARRI Worldsales, 100 mins.; AMC Santa Monica



Cinema Management Group's Saving Santa 3D

#6, *Three-60*, DeAPlaneta International, 101 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #7, *Rob The Mob*, The Exchange, 100 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, *The Great Chameleon*, Imageworks Entertainment International, 97 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, *The Sea*, Independent, 87 mins.; Doubletree #1, *Cubicle Warriors*, Breakthrough Entertainment Inc., 81 mins.; Fairmont #1, *The Lookalike*, Arclight Films, 115 mins.; Fairmont #2, *Tapped*, Screen Media, 105 mins.; Fairmont #3, *John Doe: Vigilante*, Little Film Company, 90 mins.; Fairmont #4, *Panzer Chocolate*, Stealth Media Group, 90 mins.; Fairmont #5, *Some Velvet Morning*, International Film Trust, 82 mins.; Laemmle Monica #2, *We Gotta Get Out Of This Place*, Lightning Entertainment Group, Inc., 91 mins.; Laemmle Monica #3, *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby: Him & Her*, Myriad Pictures, 190 mins.; Laemmle Monica #4, *7th Floor*, Film Factory Entertainment, 89 mins.; Loews #1, *The Human Race*, Jinga Films Limited, 89 mins.; Loews #2, *Apokalips X*, Birch Tree Entertainment, 95 mins.; Ocean Screening, *Vijay And I*, The Match Factory, 96 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, *Transit*, Electric Entertainment, 92 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #1, *The Magic Snowflake*,

Gaumont, 100 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #2, *Starred Up*, Independent, 100 mins.

**1:00 PM** AMC Santa Monica #3, *Heavenly Sword*, TriCoast Worldwide, 83 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, *Minuscule, Valley of the Lost Ants*, Futurikon, 80 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #6, *Oculus*, Focus Features International, 105 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #7, *Korengal*, Goldcrest Films International, 87 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #1, *Crimes of Passion: Tragedy in a Country Churchyard*, Svensk Filmindustri, AB, 90 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, *Family United*, Film Factory Entertainment, 102 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, *Torment*, Filmix International, 80 mins.; Doubletree #1, *Skinwalker Ranch*, Highland Film Group, 96 mins.; Fairmont #1, *Osamu Tezuka's BUDDHA2*, Toei Company, Ltd., 80 mins.; Fairmont #2, *The Outsider*, Premiere Entertainment Group, 94 mins.; Fairmont #3, *A Birder's Guide to Everything*, Screen Media, 88 mins.; Fairmont #4, *S&O Silvestre*, Cinema do Brasil, 80 mins.; Fairmont #5, *I'm in Love With A Church Girl*, Mission Pictures International, 90 mins.; Laemmle Monica #1, *Those Happy Years*, Celluloid Dreams / Celluloid Nightmares,

100 mins.; Laemmle Monica #2, *Cuban Fury*, STUDIOCANAL, 100 mins.; Loews #1, *Zombex*, VMI Worldwide, 90 mins.; Loews #2, *Experiment Night*, Bleiberg Entertainment, 86 mins.; Ocean Screening, *Saving Santa 3D*, Cinema Management Group (CMG), 84 mins.

**3:00 PM** AMC Santa Monica #1, *Vendetta*, Intandem Films, 106 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #2, *Mindscape*, STUDIOCANAL, 99 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #4, *Lumberjack Man*, Madisonian Films, 107 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, *Foosball*, Film Factory Entertainment, 106 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #6, *The Hooligan Factory*, Altitude Film Sales, 87 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #7, *Final Recipe*, CJ Entertainment, 98 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #1, *All The Wrong Reasons*, Myriad Pictures, 90 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, *The Right Kind of Wrong*, WestEnd Films, 96 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #3, *Neverlake*, Rai Trade, 90 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, *Life's A Breeze*, Magnolia Pictures, 83 mins.; Doubletree #1, *We Are So Young*, Cinema do Brasil, 104 mins.; Fairmont #1, *Willow Creek*, Kaleidoscope Film Distribution, 90 mins.; Fairmont #2, *Dementamania*, Stealth Media Group, 85 mins.; Fairmont #3, *April Apocalypse*, Darlight, 100

mins.; Fairmont #4, *I'll Follow You Down*, Breakthrough Entertainment Inc., 92 mins.; Fairmont #5, *A Fine Step*, VMI Worldwide, 90 mins.; Laemmle Monica #1, *Belle & Sebastian*, Gaumont, 100 mins.; Laemmle Monica #2, *Pantani: The Accidental Death of a Cyclist*, Goldcrest Films International, 93 mins.; Laemmle Monica #3, *Blitz Patrollie*, Picture Tree International GmbH, 110 mins.; Loews #1, *Shock Attack*, Worldwide Film Entertainment, 88 mins.; Loews #2, *Shanghai Belle*, Wide, 100 mins.; Ocean Screening, *Northern Soul*, Little Film Company, 90 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, *Paradise, Mundial*, 105 mins.

**5:00 PM** AMC Santa Monica #1, *Favela*, Moonstone Entertainment, 95 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #2, *Still Life*, Beta Cinema, 87 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #3, *Exit Marrakech*, ARRI Worldsales, 122 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #4, *The Battle of the Sexes*, Goldcrest Films International, 86 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, *Run Boy Run*, Radiant Films International, 108 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #6, *Third Person*, Corsan, 130 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #1, *Inside Out: The People's Art Project*, WestEnd Films, 70 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, *Beyond the Edge 3D*,



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Altitude Film Sales, 93 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, **Zip & Zap and the Marble Gang**, Film Factory Entertainment, 92 mins.; Doubletree #1, **Iris: New Generation**, Finecut, 115 mins.; Fairmont #1, **Blood of Redemption**, VMI Worldwide, 85 mins.; Fairmont #2, **Toolbox Murders 2**, TriCoast Worldwide, 90 mins.; Fairmont #3, **The Great Passage**, Shochiku Co., Ltd., 133 mins.; Fairmont #4, **ASK THIS OF RIKYU**, Toei Company, Ltd., 123 mins.; Fairmont #5, **The Knife That Killed Me**, Stealth Media Group, 95 mins.; Laemmle Monica #2, **Canopy**, Odin's Eye Entertainment, 84 mins.; Laemmle Monica #4, **Mr. Morgan's Last Love**, Global Screen GmbH, 120 mins.; Loews #1, **3 Minutes**, Wide, 76 mins.; Loews #2, **The 4G Theory Promo Reel**, Bazelevs, 25 mins.; Ocean Screening, **Greencard Warriors**, Little Film Company, 90 mins.; Tunnel Post #1, **Savaged**, Raven Banner Entertainment, 95 mins.

**7:00 PM** Ocean Screening, **The Hunted**, Cinema Management Group (CMG), 88 mins.

## TOMORROW

**8:30 AM** AMC Santa Monica #3, **Young Detective Dee: Rise of the Sea Dragon**, Huayi

Brothers Media Corporation, 133 mins.; Laemmle Monica #3, **Louis Cyr**, Entertainment One, 133 mins.

**8:45 AM** Laemmle Monica #1, **Half of a Yellow Sun**, Metro International Entertainment, 120 mins.

**9:00 AM** AMC Santa Monica #2, **The Selfish Giant**, Protagonist Pictures, 90 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, **Lucky Them**, The Works, 97 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #6, **Rob The Mob**, The Exchange, 100 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #7, **The Hooligan Factory**, Altitude Film Sales, 87 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #1, **Quality Time**, Beta Cinema, 101 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, **The Adulteen**, TF1 International, 88 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #3, **Sunshine on Leith**, Focus Features International, 100 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, **Miss Zombie**, Celluloid Dreams / Celluloid Nightmares, 85 mins.; Doubletree #1, **Linsanity**, Fortissimo Films, 88 mins.; Laemmle Monica #2, **The Marchers**, EuropaCorp, 110 mins.; Laemmle Monica #4, **The Truth About Emanuel**, Myriad Pictures, 95 mins.; Ocean Screening, **Decoding Annie Parker**, Radiant Films International, 91 mins.

**11:00 AM** AMC Santa Monica #2, **Badges of Fury**, Easternlight, 94 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #3, **Around the Block**, Arclight Films, 104 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, **Exists**, International Film Trust, 81 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #6, **The Tell-Tale Heart**, Darclight, 115 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #7, **The Borderlands**, The Salt Company, 89 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #1, **Made in America**, The Exchange, 90 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #3, **Black Brothers**, Global Screen GmbH, 105 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, **Viral**, DeAPlaneta International, 90 mins.; Doubletree #1, **Feed Me**, Cinema do Brasil, 100 mins.; Fairmont #1, **The Grief Tourist**, Vision Films, 93 mins.; Fairmont #2, **Three Night Stand**, Myriad Pictures, 88 mins.; Fairmont #3, **Back in the Day**, Screen Media, 90 mins.; Fairmont #4, **Jungle**, Latido Films, 83 mins.; Fairmont #5, **45 Minutes to Ramallah**, Little Film Company, 90 mins.; Laemmle Monica #1, **The Wonders**, Lightning Entertainment Group, Inc., 112 mins.; Laemmle Monica #2, **The Culling**, Highland Film Group, 90 mins.; Laemmle Monica #3, **Almost Human**, WTFilms, 80 mins.; Laemmle Monica #4, **I'll Follow You Down**, Breakthrough Entertainment

Inc., 92 mins.; Loews #1, **The Birth of Anarchy PUNK 76**, VMI Worldwide, 85 mins.; Loews #2, **Delivery**, Bleiberg Entertainment, 85 mins.; Ocean Screening, **Wetlands**, The Match Factory, 109 mins.

**1:00 PM** AMC Santa Monica #1, **The House of Magic**, STUDIOCANAL, 85 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #2, **Johnson**, The Salt Company, 90 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #4, **Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return**, Hyde Park International, 90 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #1, **Bullet**, SC Films International, 90 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, **Mercury Factor**, Rai Trade, 114 mins.; Doubletree #1, **Borgman**, Fortissimo Films, 113 mins.; Fairmont #1, **Freedom Station**, Cinema do Brasil, 88 mins.; Fairmont #2, **Camera Trap**, 108 Media, 100 mins.; Fairmont #3, **Cannon Fodder**, Screen Media, 90 mins.; Fairmont #4, **Born to Race: Fast Track**, American Cinema International, 95 mins.; Fairmont #5, **Gallowwalkers**, VMI Worldwide, 91 mins.; Laemmle Monica #1, **Me, Myself and Mum**, Gaumont, 85 mins.; Laemmle Monica #2, **The Returned**, Filmmax International, 98 mins.; Laemmle Monica #3, **The Double**, Protagonist Pictures, 93 mins.; Laemmle Monica #4, **Bloody April Fools**, Film Factory Entertainment, 70 mins.; Loews #1, **Only in New York**, Wide, 95 mins.; Loews #2, **All American Christmas Carol**, Red Sea Media, 89 mins.; Ocean Screening, **Saving Santa 3D**, Cinema Management Group (CMG), 84 mins.

**3:00 PM** AMC Santa Monica #1, **TOM YUM GOONG 2 (TYG2)**, Sahamongkolfilm International Co., Ltd., 90 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #2, **Felony**, The Solution Entertainment Group, 106 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #4, **Land of the Bears**, Kinology, 86 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, **Bethlehem**, WestEnd Films, 99 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #7, **Djinn**, Fortissimo Films, 90 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #1, **Instructions Not Included**, Highland Film Group,

115 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, **Army of Frankensteins**, Empress Road Pictures, 104 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, **Montana**, The Salt Company, 105 mins.; Doubletree #1, **Cas and Dylan**, Breakthrough Entertainment Inc., 90 mins.; Fairmont #1, **The Ultimate Life**, Mission Pictures International, 90 mins.; Fairmont #2, **Snake and Mongoose**, American Cinema International, 100 mins.; Fairmont #3, **Espectro**, Darclight, 115 mins.; Fairmont #4, **The Priest's Children**, Wide, 93 mins.; Fairmont #5, **Buddies**, Cinema do Brasil, 103 mins.; Laemmle Monica #1, **Three Many Weddings**, Film Factory Entertainment, 95 mins.; Laemmle Monica #3, **World Petank Tour**, EuropaCorp, 100 mins.; Laemmle Monica #4, **The Reckoning**, Lightning Entertainment Group, Inc., 85 mins.; Loews #1, **Crawl or Die**, VMI Worldwide, 90 mins.; Loews #2, **Goldberg & Eisenberg**, Jinga Films Limited, 97 mins.; Ocean Screening, **Viy 3D**, Event Film, 112 mins.

**5:00 PM** AMC Santa Monica #1, **Friend: The Great Legacy**, Lotte Entertainment, 120 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #2, **Barcelona Summer Night**, Filmmax International, 90 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #3, **Rigor Mortis**, Fortissimo Films, 101 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #4, **Life Deluxe**, TrustNordisk Aps, 127 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #5, **Joe**, WestEnd Films, 117 mins.; AMC Santa Monica #7, **Chinese Puzzle**, STUDIOCANAL, 100 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #1, **Before the Winter Chill**, TF1 International, 103 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #2, **Pulling Strings**, Highland Film Group, 110 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #3, **I Am Soldier**, SC Films International, 90 mins.; Broadway Cineplex #4, **Cannibal**, Film Factory Entertainment, 116 mins.; Doubletree #1, **Antisocial**, Breakthrough Entertainment Inc., 92 mins.; Fairmont #1, **Banklady**, Global Screen GmbH, 117 mins. **THR**



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Source: comScore, Aug. 2013

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# 8 Decades of *The Hollywood Reporter*

The most glamorous and memorable moments from a storied history

Heigl in 1994, the year of her first leading film role, as Gerard Depardieu's daughter in *My Father the Hero*.

Onscreen marriage has (mostly) agreed with Heigl

A FEW YEARS AGO AT the American Film Market, there would have been a lot more love between sellers of a Katherine Heigl romantic comedy and buyers. The actress had scored a major hit with 2007's *Knocked Up* and had become a bankable romantic comedy star, particularly overseas, where her films regularly drew about half of their box office (\$83 million of a \$160 million worldwide take for 2008's *27 Dresses*, \$116 million of *The Ugly Truth*'s total \$205 million in 2009). But her star dimmed with the less-than-stellar returns of such movies as 2012's *One for the Money*, which cost \$40 million and took in only \$37 million worldwide (with a 2 percent Rotten Tomatoes rating), and 2013's *The Big Wedding*, which so far has taken in \$21.8 million domestically on a \$35 million budget (it still is rolling out overseas). And Heigl's reputation for being difficult certainly hasn't helped matters. Now she's starring as a bride to be in *Jenny's Wedding*, a comedy that co-stars Tom Wilkinson as her dad that The Solution Group is selling here at AFM. It's a chance for Heigl, now 34, to get her rom-com tiara back. — C. MOLLY SMITH

## Calmer waters in sequels' wake

'Knocked Up' to lead newbies as super bows take a week off

By Brian Fuson

After a month of high-octane, A-list tentpoles, the North American boxoffice gets a breather of sorts this session as not one sequel enters the marketplace. It will be a brief respite, however, as Warner Bros. Pictures' "Ocean's Thirteen" hits theaters June 8.

Theater counts for the weekend's new films are coming down to earth; not one of the female three...

Judd Apatow, who also directed Universal's "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" and was a producer on Sony Pictures' "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby" and Universal's "Kicking & Screaming."

"Virgin" opened in August 2005 to a respectable \$21.4 million, found its legs and went on to generate \$109.2 million by the time it left theaters in December — a nice run, especially by today's standards. "Vir-



"Knocked Up," left, "Mr. Brooks" and "Gracie" open wide

largely to males and females in the 18-34 demo but could find a wider audience as early polling has found interest across the

after the tragic death of cancer champion brother, Gracie wins the right to play where to play.



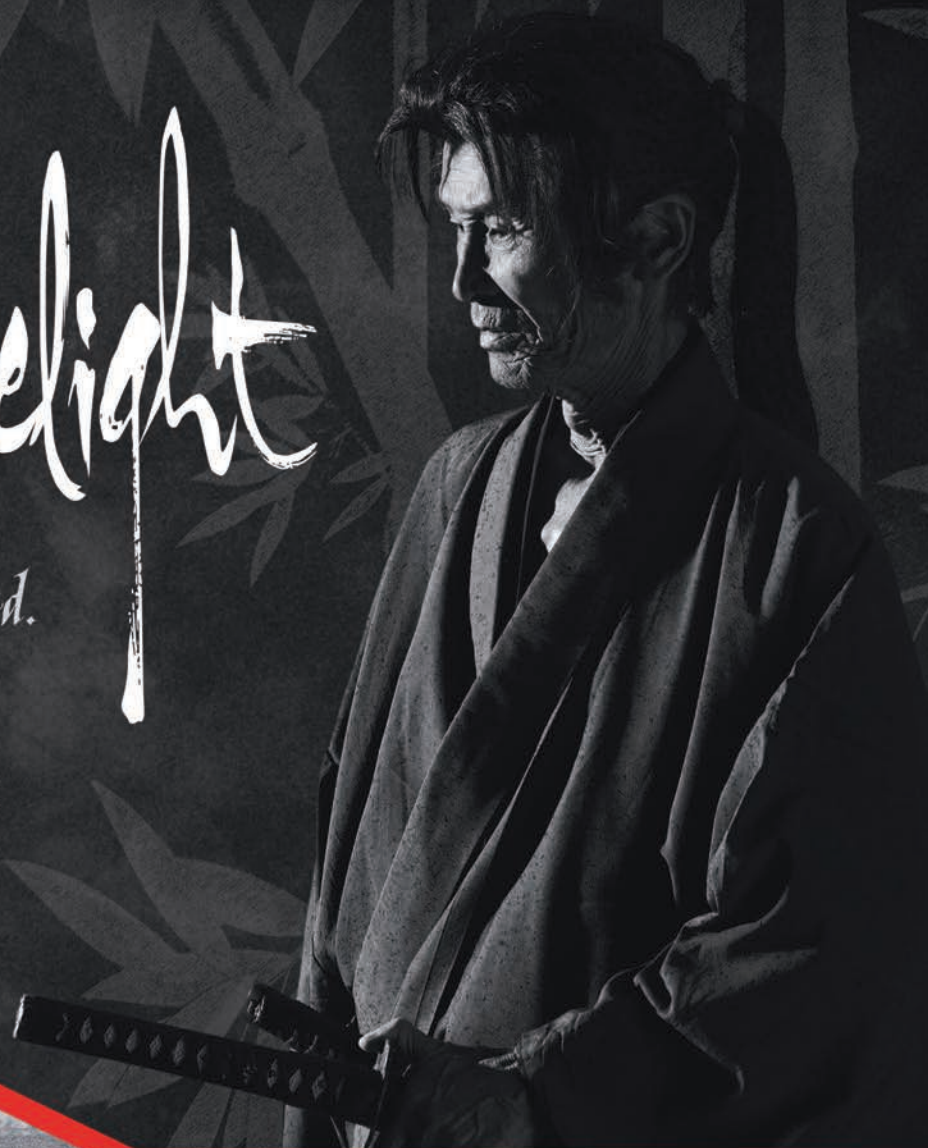
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